

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

International book fair
kicks off in Havana

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Florida rallies defend affirmative action

Unions, students build mass demonstration for March 7

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Mass rallies and meetings are taking place across Florida to defend affirmative action. A statewide action is called for the opening of the annual legislative session in the capital of Tallahassee March 7.

The struggle is in response to a high-handed executive order by Gov. John Ellis Bush prohibiting “racial or gender set-asides, preferences or quotas” in government hiring and contracting, or in admissions to state universities.

It was a bad week for the Bush family, between George Bush’s defeat in the New Hampshire primaries and his brother being caught by surprise at the militant and widespread opposition to his attempt to scuttle a hard-won gain.

According to the *Tallahassee Democrat*, 2,000 students marched from Florida A&M University to the Capitol to defend affirmative action February 8. Carrying signs that read, “No One Florida”—in opposition to the cynically named Bush proposal—and “The Bush Wack,” the students organized what the paper called “the most enthusiastic demonstration against One Florida to date.”

In Miami, more than 4,000 people rallied downtown February 3 in a lively and confident action. The crowd transformed a public hearing into a rally by defenders of affirmative action. They rejected pleas from legislators to keep it a formal hearing, demanding that the floor microphones be put where everyone could see them, insisting that they be allowed to address the crowd rather than the legislators, and ignoring the three-minute speaking time limit.

Pro-affirmative action organizers from



2,000 students rally at Florida state capitol to defend affirmative action February 8

the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; the NAACP; and Jobs with Justice led chants, including, “We’re not going back!”

Union T-shirts and jackets were evident from the Teamsters, International Longshoremen’s Association, Communication Workers of America, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Participation by workers was noticeable, along with businessmen and students.

The overwhelming majority of the Miami protesters were Black. Many of the students, workers, and others were women.

There was significant participation by Haitians as well.

The protesters came to testify and participate in the hearing, which had been shifted at the last minute to the 1,700-seat Gusman Theater for the Performing Arts from the small Miami-Dade county council chambers. Some came as part of organized groups, but the majority showed up on their own or with friends and family members.

People began lining up outside the theater two hours before the hearing started, and there was a line of people waiting to get in all day, as people were able to come

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Fascists in Austria join coalition government

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON
AND PATRICK O’NEILL

Protests in Austria have condemned the new government there, a coalition of the conservative People’s Party and the ultraright Freedom Party of Jörg Haider.

Thousands clashed with riot police outside the Hofburg presidential palace February 4 during the official swearing-in ceremony, and marchers blew whistles, banged on pans, and shouted “Haider is a fascist!” They held placards reading, “Haider’s Austria is not my Austria.” Some 15,000 people held a protest two nights earlier in Vienna during negotiations to form the coalition.

The entry of Haider’s party into government was greeted by a storm of protest from European imperialist governments and from Washington. Many politicians and reports in the big business media portray the new government as an aberration. Leftist groups went so far as to hold rallies demanding their imperialist governments enact sanctions against Austria.

Haider has taken advantage of this response to paint himself as a defender of democracy and the Austrian people.

Two days after his party was sworn into government, Haider answered the attacks by demanding that Germans expelled from Czech territory at the end of WWII receive the same compensation as Jews in Austria who were persecuted by the Nazis.

Far from being a freak occurrence, the events in Austria highlight the fact that

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Sinn Fein condemns London’s move to reimpose direct rule on Northern Ireland

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON—Taking aim at the Irish freedom struggle—and with the usual imperial arrogance and hypocrisy of Britain’s ruling rich—the Labour government of Anthony Blair introduced legislation February 8 to reimpose direct rule over Northern Ireland.

The move would end the new assembly there and the limited “self-government” granted by London in the Good Friday agreement.

The Blair government issued an ultimatum February 4 that either the Irish Republican Army (IRA) begin handing over its weapons or the entire governmental structures set up under the agreement would be scrapped.

Blair’s Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Mandelson, announced details of the plan to the House of Commons shortly after Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams and the party’s two ministers in the Northern Ireland Assembly emerged from a meeting with Blair at Downing Street.

The bill was expected to go to the House of Lords, then to the queen for “Royal Assent” on February 11. Thus, if no last-minute agreement is reached, the assembly would be dissolved prior to a meeting of the pro-British Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) set to convene the following day.

The IRA is neither a member of the as-

sembly nor a signer of the Good Friday accord. It fought an armed campaign to end British military occupation of the six counties and stands for a united, independent Ireland. It has observed a cease-fire since July

1997. The IRA issued a statement that said, “Those who have once again made the political process conditional on the decommissioning of silenced IRA arms are respon-

Continued on Page 4

Dockworkers in South Carolina face new indictments

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—A state grand jury indicted four members of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) on frame-up charges of rioting and conspiracy here February 8, in the state government’s latest attack on the union.

Six hundred cops attacked hundreds of ILA members who were protesting the use of nonunion labor on the docks January 20. Eight workers were arrested that day and charged with inciting to riot, including three of those indicted by the grand jury. A magistrate threw out the initial charges due to lack of evidence.

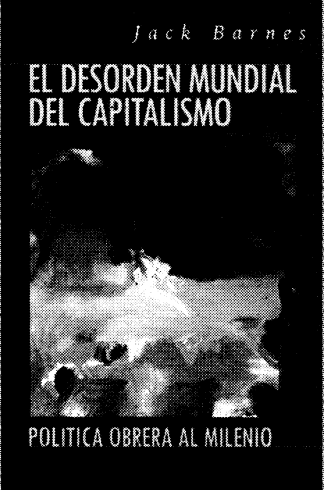
A ninth worker, Kenneth Jefferson, was arrested several days later after turning himself in to the cops, and released on \$150,000 bail. He was also indicted by the grand jury. The new charges carry penalties of up to 5 to 10 years in prison. State attorney general Charles Condon has threatened action against other ILA members when another grand jury convenes in March.

“This is a hoax,” declared Jessie Thrower, referring to the indictments, as he stopped

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Vieques fisherman speaks in Boston

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—"We have lived in a prison in our own land for 60 years," said Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Vieques fishermen and spokesperson for the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. Guadalupe spoke at Harvard University January 30. He explained to a group of 20 people the history of Vieques and the current stage of the fight to get the U.S. Navy out of the Puerto Rican island.

In the name of training pilots to bomb Germany at the beginning of WWII, the first U.S. government expropriations of land belonging to the people of Vieques took place. "The Second World War never ended in Vieques, because the U.S. is still there," Guadalupe said. Over the next decades the "people were taken out of their homes and put onto reservations." Today, "out of the 36,000 acres of land in Vieques the U.S. Navy occupies 24,000 acres," he said.

The U.S. military also controls the ocean around the island. This has had a severe

impact on the fishermen. "The natural places are no longer available for us to fish," he said. "The U.S. Navy controls the hours we can fish. The military might say we will be in the area from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and tells us 'you can fish after that.'"

The naval exercises result in the destruction of the coral reef and the underwater vegetation, all part of the food chain for the fish. Also, as a result of bombs exploding in the water, tortoises, whales, and manatees are killed, some of which are near to extinction.

The Vieques fishermen set traps on the bottom of the ocean that are tied to buoys on top so they can be located. Many are destroyed by U.S. Navy ships when they go over the top of them during their maneuvers.

"That is why," Guadalupe said, "the fishermen are the most affected by and the most adamantly opposed to the U.S. Navy incursions." Guadalupe also pointed out that the people of Vieques have the highest cancer rate in all of Puerto Rico, a rate that is projected to rise. There are high levels of lead,



Militant/Martin Koppel

"The fishermen are the most affected by and the most adamantly opposed to the U.S. Navy incursions," said Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. Above, fishermen at dock in Vieques.

mercury, and copper in the surrounding areas. He said a recent survey "found 80 percent of the people in Vieques have had a family member with cancer."

Guadalupe said the residents of Vieques are a people "who refuse to leave our land,

and who want to live in peace. We want to develop the island, not destroy it."

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Governor of Illinois suspends death penalty

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

CHICAGO—On January 31, in the first such move since the death penalty was reinstated in the United States in 1977, Gov. George Ryan declared a moratorium on executions in the state of Illinois.

Ryan admitted that the state has a "shameful record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row." Since the death penalty was brought back to Illinois, 13 death row inmates have been exonerated, while 12 have been executed.

The moratorium comes in the wake of a multipart series in the *Chicago Tribune* exposing some of the most blatant abuses carried out by prosecutors, cops, and the courts in capital cases. The articles described police torture to obtain confessions, the use of so-called jailhouse informants, and incompetent legal representation for the accused. In addition, they pointed to numerous cases of recanted testimony, improper rulings by judges, the exclusion of Blacks from some juries, and misconduct by prosecutors. Of

the 260 cases that have been appealed, half have been awarded a new trial or new sentencing hearing.

Illinois is far from unique in its large number of overturned convictions. Some 38 states have the death penalty. In Florida, 18 death row cases have been reversed. Nationally, since 1973, 85 people on death row have been either retried and acquitted, or had the charges against them dropped.

Ryan projected forming a committee to study the flaws in the state's capital punishment system. The composition of the committee has not been announced, and so far there is no timetable or deadline for the committee's work.

"The machinery of capital punishment in our state is broken and it cannot be fixed," David Protess is quoted as saying in the *Chicago Sun Times*. Protess, a professor at Northwestern University, worked with students in investigating death-row cases. Their research led to the exoneration of several condemned inmates, including Anthony Porter, who came

within two days of being executed.

The extent of the blow that has been dealt to the use of capital punishment is registered in the fact that Ryan's announcement of the moratorium met with little opposition among the state's politicians and prosecutors, including the Senate leadership which blocked a moratorium proposal in 1999.

Last year the Illinois Supreme Court launched the Special Committee on Capital Cases, a panel of 17 judges charged with recommending reforms for the application of the death penalty. The committee has suggested that police interrogations be videotaped and that lawyers on both sides of capital punishment cases be certified.

Ryan continues to support the death penalty, but stated, "Until I can be sure with moral certainty that no innocent man or woman is facing a lethal injection, no one will meet that fate." Supporters of the death penalty in state government are preparing to marshal arguments to make the case for such "moral certainty."

State Senator Kirk Dillard told the *Chicago Tribune*, "I don't know how any of us could oppose the governor wanting to make sure that the death-penalty system, the most important cornerstone of Illinois criminal law, is working properly."

There are more than 150 people currently on death row in Illinois.

Bosses shortcut safety, mine caves in

BY JAN MILLER

FT. COLLINS, Colorado—A roof caved in at the Solvay Mineral's trona mine in southwest Wyoming January 30. The cave-in triggered a seismic shock that registered 4.4 in magnitude according to Jim Case, head of the State Geological Survey.

One worker was injured. The mine was evacuated and shut down. High concentrations of methane gas will have to be cleared from the underground mine before inspection teams from the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) begin their investigation. The company reported it continues its surface mine operations.

Trona ore is processed into soda ash, a key ingredient in glass and detergent making, and a widely used industrial chemical. Ninety percent of the world's natural soda ash production comes from five mines in southwest Wyoming.

Solvay was the site of another cave-in five years ago, on Feb. 3, 1995. Fifty-four miners were working in the mine 1,600 feet below ground at the time. Two were trapped by falling rock and rubble. One shuttle-car operator was rescued after 36 hours, but the second miner, 26-year-old Mike Anderson, died of cardiac arrest as he was being evacuated by a mine rescue team.

In a report after the 1995 collapse, which created a magnitude 5.2 seismic shock, MSHA concluded, "The company's mine pillars were too small—too much ore being extracted—and a massive pillar failure occurred." The report also concluded that Solvay had not violated any federal safety regulations, but an article in the *Casper Star Tribune* on Feb. 1, 2000, stated, "The agency (MSHA) did suggest that Solvay slow the rate of trona extraction to increase safety in the mine."

THE MILITANT

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License granted for farmers' trip to Cuba

BY PAUL CORNISH
AND JILL FEIN

ATLANTA—The Atlanta Network on Cuba has been granted a license by the Secretary of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control to organize a trip of farmers from the United States to Cuba.

Six farmers who have been part of struggles against farm foreclosures, the devastating effects of the drop in prices paid to farmers for their products, and racist and sexist discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture will travel to Cuba February 12. They have been invited by the National Association of Small Farmers for a one-week exchange.

The license grants the farmers the right to carry out "a structured program schedule of humanitarian and agricultural assessment activities, as consistent with section 515.575 of the Regulations during the visits to Cuba."

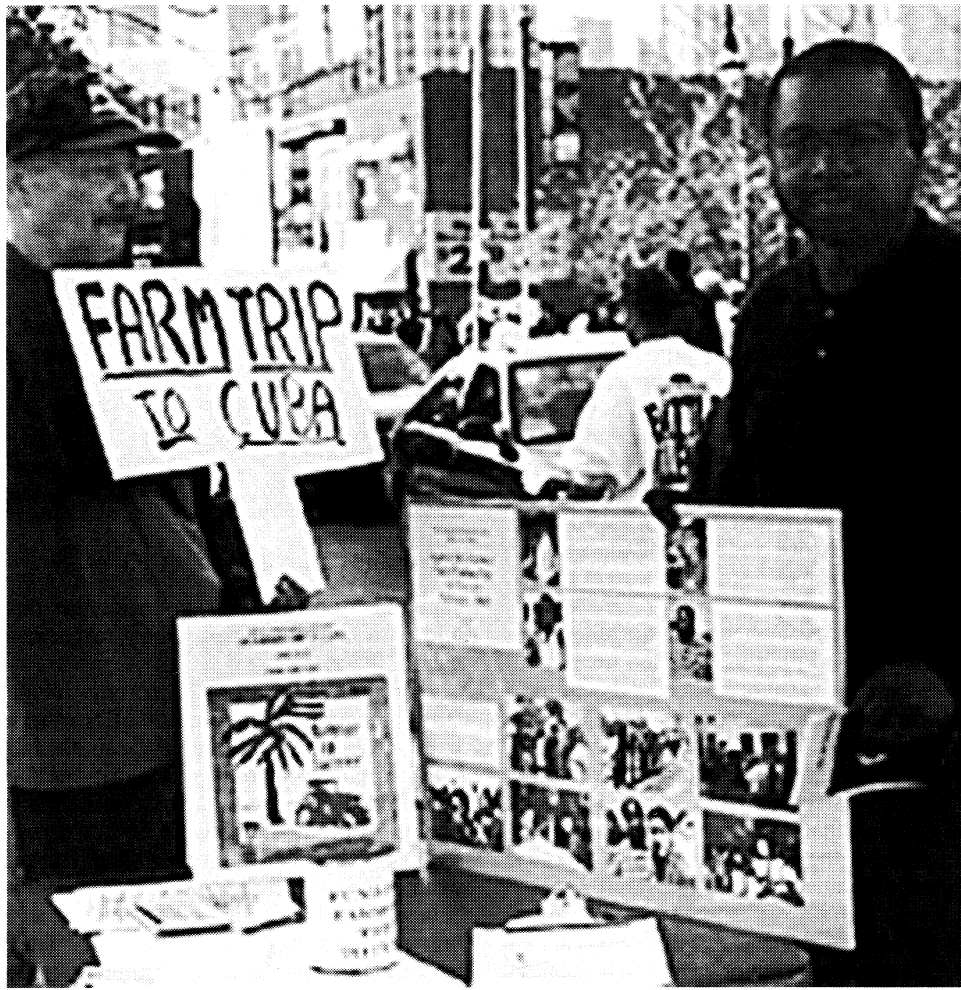
The U.S. government prevents its citizens from freely traveling to Cuba as part of its attempt to isolate and overturn the revolution.

While stopping short of an overtly unconstitutional bar on travel, regulations prohibit citizens from spending money while in Cuba unless they obtain approval from the Treasury Department, which has strict guidelines on who qualifies for the exemption.

Taking advantage of the fact that a large number of officials of various agricultural companies and farmers have been granted the right to travel to Cuba, the Atlanta Network on Cuba applied for the license last month for the trip.

For example, Illinois governor George Ryan took a 45-member delegation to Cuba last October that included officials of Archer Daniels Midland, Corp., Schering-Plough Corp., and the John Deere Foundation. The American Farm Bureau Federation president also visited Cuba last year. He, along with many agribusiness officials, see Cuba as a potential market for farm goods.

As part of getting out information on the fight of farmers, and about the trip to Cuba, Eddie Slaughter spoke to 150 students at an event sponsored by the Black History Month



Militant/Linda Joyce

Farmer Willie Head (right) staffs table promoting trip to Cuba at Martin Luther King Day events in Atlanta. Six farmers are invited by Cuban farm organization.

Steering Committee at the North Georgia College. North Georgia College, located 45 miles north of Atlanta, is historically a military college. Many students at the meeting wore army fatigues.

Slaughter, a farmer from south Georgia, is the national vice-president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association. He spoke about his involvement with the class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for discriminatory practices against farmers who are Black. The talk, entitled "Black Farmers, Family Farmers: The

Fight for Land and Justice Today," was the first official event of Black History Month.

Slaughter pointed to the discrimination the farmers face. "Black farmers are losing their land at three and a half times the rate of white farmers. On average it takes 122 days for processing loan applications for Black farmers as opposed to 65 days for a white farmer," he said.

Faced with the lawsuit and determined action by farmers, including rallies and other mobilizations, the Clinton administration declared a settlement in the suit. Many

farmers have yet to receive the \$50,000 or a deed to their land as promised. Slaughter pointed out that farmers who are part of the lawsuit are ineligible for any kind of disaster payments that other farmers qualify for. "Black farmers are penalized twice because of their involvement with the lawsuit against the USDA," he said.

'Castro is not my enemy'

Slaughter told the students he looked forward to visiting Cuba because, "There is no justice in America for the Black and the poor. Justice in America is for sale, just like everything else in the capitalist system. Black farmers don't have the money to buy justice in this country. We are taking our fight to Cuba and asking Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela to stand before the United Nations with us."

"Why do you want to stand beside the worst man in the entire world and what possible advance do you think you and the farmers can make by going to Cuba?" asked one student.

Slaughter said he appreciates Cuba's international missions, including their participation in the military battles that defended newly independent Angola from invasion by the white-minority regime of South Africa in the 1970s.

Cuban president Fidel Castro, he said, is "not my enemy. He's my friend. I admire Fidel."

"I can understand why you're going to Cuba and you don't think there's justice in this country," another student said. "Look at the way the U.S. treated Cuba right after the revolution. The Cubans came to the U.S. for help and were totally rejected so they had to turn elsewhere."

A faculty member put forward the point of view that there is a great deal of racism in Cuba. Another meeting participant responded, "But it's the U.S. that has the Confederate flag, not Cuba."

Slaughter explained that even though the U.S. government admits to discriminatory practices against Black farmers, "There has been no justice. We are faced with no other choice than to take our fight to Cuba and to internationalize the fight."

At the end of the discussion one student said, "I disagreed at first about why you should take the struggle to Cuba, but now I understand and wish you luck." There were other students who expressed agreement with the decision of some of the farmers to take the fight to Cuba but there were also many who did not see why anyone would want Fidel Castro as an ally.

Ernesto Johnson, a student at the college and member of the ROTC, said, "People just have to do what they have to do if you can't get justice here, especially if it is for humanitarian reasons."

Paul Cornish is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Irish farmers picket slaughterhouses

BY ANN HOWIE

MANCHESTER, England—Tens of thousands of beef farmers, organized by the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), threw up round-the-clock picket lines and used farm machinery to blockade entrances at the 40 meat processing plants across the Republic of Ireland January 11.

The IFA farmers were responding to an increase in charges for veterinarian services levied by the processing companies after the government cut subsidies for the vet charges. This was the last straw for the farmers who were already forced to sell their cattle for less than the costs of production.

While it costs 85 pence per pound to produce average grade beef, farmers have been receiving at the most 84 pence per pound from the processing plants before the new charge was levied.

The majority of these farmers work very small holdings, the average herd size being just 12 animals.

The processors rapidly backed off the charge increase, but farmers continued their action, demanding a price of 90 pence per pound and other measures. In a report published in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, IFA president Tom Parlon summed up the attitude of the farmers: "It is almost our last stand and we must win this battle.... The factories made £50 million clear profit on our backs late this year and all we are asking is our fair share of that."

The Irish Meat Association won a court injunction against the IFA, but the farmers continued the action anyway. Then the judge who issued the injunction added a fine of £100,000 per day for any breach of the injunction, but to no avail. When the judge upped the daily fines to £500,000, the IFA leadership formally voted to call off the actions, then promptly resigned their posts, still thwarting the judge's order. Farmers' pickets continued to keep the processing plants closed.

In face of this determination, the packhouse bosses and the court lifted the in-

junction January 20 after the judge, Dairmuid O'Donovan, complained he wasn't prepared to watch his order deliberately flouted.

In the following days, pickets were lifted at processing plants as bosses one by one conceded to the IFA's demands. By the end of January farmers had won an average increase of 7 pence per pound across all processing plants, and the pickets were taken down. Details of the settlement and photos of the farmers' picket lines can be seen on the internet at www.ifa.ie/.

"The determined action of the IFA and farmers with the meat factories over the last 14 days has returned dignity and power back to livestock producers," Parlon said in a press release. "For the first time ever farmers now have published prices for every meat plant in the country before they sell their stock. Farmers can now see exactly what they are getting for cattle and are no longer relying on dealers or agents for this information."

It is not just beef farmers who are suffering the results of low prices and high production costs. Of the 140,000 farmers in Ireland, only an estimated 80,000 are in a commercially viable position.

Farmers in Northern Ireland, seeing the results of the IFA action, set up pickets at beef processing factories there. Miceal McCoy, chair of the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA) that organized the protest, said in a telephone interview January 25 that the pickets were a warning that farmers in the north were capable of doing what was done in the south.

NIAPA is a union of 4,000–5,000 mainly small beef and sheep farmers from the poorest areas of Northern Ireland. "Farming has been in crisis here for four years, particularly since the BSE [Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy—Mad Cow Disease] crisis began," McCoy said. Because Northern Ireland is maintained as part of the United Kingdom and ruled from Westminster, farmers were subject to the beef export ban im-

posed on the UK. At the same time, small farmers there face greater exploitation than their counterparts in the rest of the country. "In Northern Ireland we are getting £80–£100 less per animal than is paid in Britain," he said.

NIAPA is discussing future actions against "the unequal distribution of profits in the beef industry," McCorry said. What is at stake in this fight, he adds, is not just the future of small farmers, but the future of entire rural areas.

Series of meetings and actions to highlight crisis of family farmers

BY JOE SWANSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—Coming on the heels of 10 protests organized February 1 by dairy farmers from Wisconsin to New York to bring to public awareness the historically low prices they are receiving for milk from the processing companies, there are a series of conferences and actions that unionists, working farmers, and young people can join over the next two months.

Picket lines by the dairy farmers highlight the growing pressures on farmers across the country who are facing a ruinous drop in commodity prices.

The largest action now planned is the Rally for Rural America slated for March 21 in Washington, D.C. It is sponsored by the National Farmers Union (NFU), and farm organizations are winning support from the AFL-CIO. The Minnesota Farmers Union reports they are holding meetings across the state to build the event. Free transportation by bus is being organized to D.C. Rally organizers are projecting some 3,000 will attend from across the country.

The flyer for the rally states, "Join farmers, rural and urban citizens, church and business leaders to send a message that without real solutions by Congress to the rural

crisis America will be hurt." The NFU was the major farm group to have a presence at the anti-World Trade Organization protests in Seattle last year. The organization will hold its annual convention in Salt Lake City February 25–28.

The American Agriculture Movement (AAM) will hold its national meeting in Oklahoma City February 10–13. Their newsletter says that "due to the disastrous farm prices, we need every farmer in the country who is willing to work for better farm prices to attend this convention." The AAM is building the March actions in Washington. The newsletter says: "Farmers and labor union workers are joining together just as they have done in the past. The AFL-CIO has promised to turn out masses of workers in support of the farmers for this event."

A group of farmers working with the Atlanta Network on Cuba are embarking on a trip to Cuba and will be available for speaking engagements upon their return in mid-February. The farmers are all part of various struggles to defend their land and right to farm, and several are part of the federal class-action lawsuit against racist practices carried out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture against farmers who are Black.

15,000 march to demand truth about Bloody Sunday

BY PAUL DAVIES
AND CAROLINE BELLAMY

DERRY, Northern Ireland—Some 15,000 people marched in the annual Bloody Sunday march here January 30 demanding the British government tell the truth about the massacre of 14 civil rights demonstrators at a peaceful demonstration in 1972.

"The British government may have some regrets about calling an inquiry into Bloody Sunday. That's tough. We're here now," said Tony Doherty, whose father was one of the rights marchers killed by British paratroopers here in 1972. The killings were an attempt by the British government to set back the rising mass movement for civil and national rights that sought to overturn the second class status of Catholics, a cornerstone of British rule in the north of Ireland. In 1998 the British government conceded a public inquiry into the killings.

A week earlier a similar number marched in Belfast in a show of strength by Irish nationalists to commemorate the life of Tom Williams. Nationalists favor unification of Ireland and the end of all forms of British rule over the country. Williams was a 19-year-old volunteer in the Irish Republican

Army who was hung by the British army in 1942, despite a campaign including a 200,000 signature petition to secure a reprieve.

After Williams was hung his body was buried by the British in an unmarked grave until the end of last year. "I've not seen a demonstration as big since the funeral of Bobby Sands," said Imelda Flynn, who marched in the Bloody Sunday action as well. "There were buses there from all over, as far as Wexford and Cork. People came because there had been such a fight to get him out."

Here in Derry, Doherty and the other relatives of those killed in 1972 led the march that demanded "truth, justice, and healing." For the first time, the annual march did not culminate in a rally at Free Derry Corner, close to the sight of the British army massacres, but went through the city center to rally at the Guildhall, which will be the venue for some of the sessions of the new inquiry that is scheduled to open in March.

'A major victory'

"To me it was a major victory to be marching to the Guildhall," said Willie Arbuckle,



Militant/Roy Inglee

Thousands march January 30 in Derry to commemorate Bloody Sunday massacre

a member of the Wolfe Tone Society in London who had traveled to Derry to participate in the action.

Marchers came from all corners of the British-occupied six counties of Northern Ireland, from the Republic in the south, and from around the world. A majority of the marchers were from Derry, with many young people in attendance.

Speaking at the rally was Alana Burke, wounded on the civil rights march in 1972. "Once again the British government is trying to obscure the truth," she said. "They have granted the soldiers immunity from prosecution and have granted a request to

block the release of some Ministry of Defense material relating to Bloody Sunday. We warn them: we're not interested in a government public relations exercise."

The granting of a Public Interest Immunity Certificate to the Ministry of Defense means that it can attempt to withhold any information it likes on the grounds that "national security" is jeopardized. It has also been discovered that all but five of the rifles used in the massacre have been destroyed.

"Clearly what is coming to light through this revelation and other developments over the last two years is that those who stand to lose most from the inquiry, the British army and the Ministry of Defense, are involved in every trick in the book to prevent the true facts of Bloody Sunday from emerging," Doherty said.

Picking up on this point, Sinn Fein's Bairbre de Brun told the rally the British media "still peddle the idea that those killed were responsible for their own misfortune." De Brun, recently named as the health minister in the new assembly in Northern Ireland, was introduced to applause as "the first government minister to ever address a Bloody Sunday rally."

Joe Cox, who had come to the march from Fermanagh, explained that he was here "not for retribution but for truth and justice for those killed on Bloody Sunday."

Alex Sothorn, a student from London who was participating in the march for the first time, said he came to the march "because I wanted to see the original route and to remember the people who fought for civil rights in Derry. This is an Irish event, not just a nationalist or republican event. Its about gaining the rights of the people."

Recently released government papers detail the British state's planning of Bloody Sunday. In the weeks leading up to the massacre, government officials and army officers discussed what would be involved in retaking "Free Derry," the area of the Bogside and the Creggan that had been occupied by nationalists after the Battle of the Bogside in 1969.

During this fight the Catholic residents of the Bogside had battled the British-trained Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) for days to prevent a sectarian and triumphalist Apprentice Boys parade from marching through their community.

According to the government's report, an option advanced in 1972 by Major-General Forde, the second in command of British forces in Northern Ireland at the time, was to occupy "the Bogside militarily. The risks of casualties is high. Unarmed teenagers will be shot in the first stages."

The demonstration marched past scores of signs posted along the route and in the city center that demanded, "Disband the RUC." A banner along the way read "RUC—PSIN: What's the difference." PSIN is the abbreviation for the new police service that is to be set up as a result of British government reforms.

The RUC is widely hated by Catholics since it was used to brutally suppress the fight for national rights. The reforms, which include reducing the number of cops, are opposed by the opposition Conservative Party and the Ulster Unionists.

Days before the march, the RUC arrested a man selling black ribbons that are worn throughout Derry to commemorate those who died on Bloody Sunday.

Paul Davies is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) in Manchester, Caroline Bellamy is a member of the TGWU in London.

London to reimpose direct rule in N. Ireland

Continued from front page

sible for creating the current difficulties and for keeping the peace process in a state of perpetual crisis," adding that the "peace process is under no threat from the IRA."

In contrast, London maintains heavily armed forces in the country and—in at least one area—British Army and cop activity has increased dramatically.

The April 1998 Good Friday agreement provided for the setting up of the Northern Ireland Assembly and a new executive with powers over health, education, housing, and other matters. Control of the army and police remained with Westminster.

Reflecting the advances of the national struggle, Sinn Fein, the party leading the battle for a united Ireland, won enough votes for the assembly to have two ministers on the executive council.

The UUP, led by David Trimble, and the Ulster Democratic Party (DUP) of Ian Paisley responded to this development by blocking the formation of the executive for a year and a half.

A prop of British rule

Under the slogan "no guns, no government," the unionists demanded the IRA give up weapons before Sinn Fein could be admitted. In finally agreeing to sit on the body with Sinn Fein, the UUP unilaterally imposed the condition that the IRA begin surrendering weapons by the beginning of February. Opponents of the Irish freedom struggle charge Sinn Fein with being "the political wing" of the IRA, a claim Sinn Fein denies.

The Labour government's moves are an effort to shore up the Trimble leadership of

the UUP, which is one of the historic props of British rule. The party is deeply divided because of the gains made by nationalists. Trimble, who is also First Minister of the executive, has threatened to walk out of the body unless the IRA surrendered its arms.

Adams of Sinn Fein issued a statement published in the *Irish Voice* February 9. London's move "comes from the decision by the British government to act on an Ulster Unionist Party unilateral deadline on the weapons issue," he said, adding the "premise on which this crisis is predicated is an entirely bogus one."

Sinn Fein, Adams said, sees the Good Friday agreement "as a compromise." He told Blair in the meeting that "his government's involvement in my country and how he managed British policy in Ireland was going to be the biggest challenge of his term or terms as leader."

In the statement Adams said, "The field policies by which British rule in Ireland sustained Unionism were based on marginalizing and demonizing the rest of us" and threatened to withdraw from support of the Good Friday process if London pursued its plans.

While hypocritically demanding that the IRA disarm, London has stepped up its use of troops and colonial police, spying activities, and routine harassment in the rural area of South Armagh.

In an article in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, Toni Carragher, a leader of the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee, reports that the deployment of British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) cops has increased by 75 percent since the IRA cease-fire in 1997. "Helicopter activity, the

stopping and searching of the people of our community, both young and old, by the British Army/RUC is now at an all-time high," Carragher said. Meanwhile, army and RUC bases are continuously being refurbished and extra surveillance and infrared cameras are being installed.

"The only threat to the Peace Process is the continued unwarranted presence of the British Army and the RUC in South Armagh," Carragher concluded.

At the annual Bloody Sunday march in Derry, Sinn Fein leader Bairbre de Brun said the demonstration in 1972 had been "about civil rights and here we are 28 years later still marching for our rights and our dignity and to be treated as first and not second-class citizens."

'British responsible for conflict'

This theme was echoed by other marchers. One man from Derry said he was opposed to the IRA decommissioning its weapons because "it would mean that the IRA was saying that it and not the British were responsible for the conflict. They're asking for the IRA to surrender."

Joe Cox from Fermanagh said that "if disarmament is to be discussed it should effect everyone: all the loyalist paramilitaries and the British Army too. The British have armed the Protestants to the hilt since the plantation, and turned a blind eye to their use of weapons against Catholics over the years. They have considered it their absolute right to hold and use weapons."

"They have the same military mentality as the white settlers in South Africa," Cox said. "What we need is a democratic settlement. There is no way that the issue of arms decommissioning should be used to topple the executive, in the way that the British are threatening."

The continued use of weapons by unionist forces was brought home last year with the murder of Rosemary Nelson, a human rights lawyer who acted on behalf of Catholic residents of the Garvaghy Road in their struggle to prevent sectarian marches from going through their community.

Cox added that since the current cease-fire there has been a "charm offensive" by the army where he lives in Fermanagh. "They even stop and say 'hello' to you," he said, but noted that there has been an increase in the number of troops on foot patrols from a half dozen to at least 15. The British continue to build new military installations as well.

Paul Davies and Caroline Bellamy, reporting from Derry, Northern Ireland, contributed to this article.



Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, right, speaks at press conference in early February.

Women steelworkers buy book in Pittsburgh

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The Spanish-language edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* has rolled off the presses! Titled *El desorden mundial del capitalismo: política obrera al milenio*, socialist workers and Young Socialists have another addition to this political campaign to meet vanguard militants, sell them the book, and discuss central questions of working-class politics together as we engage in common action.

The new book is now available for shops and libraries to order. Participants in the campaign to promote this title know from their experience with the English original that many buyers, managers, and librarians will want to stock it. Unionists, working farmers, and young fighters whose first language is Spanish will be interested in helping with this effort, and in buying and reading their own copy.

The international team of volunteers who are staffing the Pathfinder stand at the Havana International Book Fair have taken a bunch of the new title with them, along with the new book *Che Talks To Young People* in Spanish and English and a full range of Pathfinder's titles. The campaign to promote *Capitalism's World Disorder* runs through March 15. This column welcomes reports from campaign activists. James Vincent writes from Pittsburgh that workers at the first United Steelworkers of America International Women's Conference bought two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* during the first

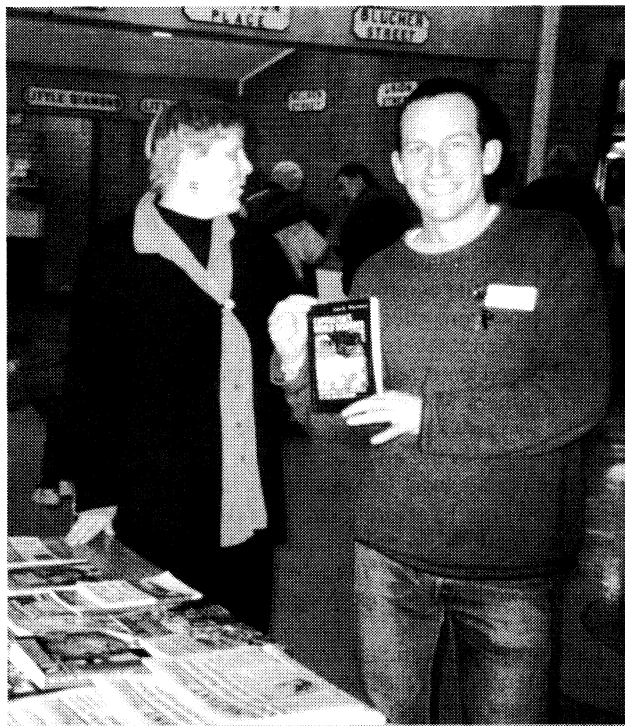
day of their meeting, attended by around 800.

Below we run reports sent in by members of two sales teams who made a special effort to promote the book and the *Militant* newspaper among dockworkers. We lead off with a report from a protest to defend affirmative action programs in Miami.

Affirmative action defenders in Miami buy papers, book

A young woman bought \$62 worth of Pathfinder books, including a \$10 Readers' Club membership, a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and titles on Cuba and women's rights at a February 3 hearing on affirmative action in Miami. Other participants picked up titles by Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, and Fidel Castro.

Volunteers set up outside the Gusman Theater, where the hearing was taking place, and received a good response from the crowd going in and out. They sold 42 copies of the *Militant* as well as one subscription. The issues of the paper that reported the massive Martin Luther King Day



Militant/Roy Inglee
Derry Sinn Fein Youth leader (right) flashes his copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*

rally in South Carolina, demanding the removal of the Confederate battle flag from the state capitol building, sold out first.

Sales to Seattle longshore workers
On February 4 a team of three volunteers

took *Militants* to the International Longshoremen's union hall in Seattle to talk to workers about the dockworkers' struggle in Charleston, South Carolina.

As workers arrived to pick up their paychecks, they told us they were following the fight on the union's web site. A couple bought the paper right away. When we reported that eight longshoremen had been framed up and three buses had gone to Columbia to join the protest against the Confederate flag, workers stopped for a longer discussion, and several bought the paper. We sold six *Militants* in all.

Dockworkers in Baltimore support Charleston fight

At the hiring hall of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in Baltimore, dozens of workers gathered before and after their shifts to check on upcoming work assignments or to try to pick up additional hours. Several stopped to talk to supporters of the *Militant* newspaper about the dockworkers' battle in Charleston and to explain that they face the same issues.

"We know all about this," said one. "They tried to bring the same ship, Nordana, up here but decided not to when they heard we wouldn't work it." Another said, "My brother works on the dock in Charleston. They are standing up for a principle and against union busting and I support them."

Some said they questioned the union officials' move to help the shipping companies lower labor costs under a new "sweetheart" union deal. The agreement sets up a second ILA Local in Baltimore and pays \$14 an hour to new hires, several dollars less than the veteran ILA members make. Many questions were raised in a couple hours of discussions with these workers. Twelve copies of the *Militant* were sold.

Rollande Girard in Miami, Cecelia Moriarity in Seattle, and Mary Martin in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

S. Carolina longshoremen face new attacks

continued from front page

by the union hall to pick up his paycheck February 9.

"I don't know how the attorney general can get someone reindicted," was the outraged response of another worker.

Since December, ILA members have been demonstrating against Nordana Lines, a Denmark-based shipping company that hired a nonunion stevedoring outfit to unload its ships in Charleston. Nordana had never signed with the Container Carrier Council, a bosses' association that has a contract with the ILA, but until November it had agreed to subscribe to the contract terms, said ILA Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley.

ILA members are paid \$24 per hour for the highly mechanized work on containerized ships, and \$16.50 per hour to handle "break bulk" cargo, which is more labor-intensive, Riley said. The nonunion outfit hired by Nordana pays about \$10 per hour with no benefits.

City and state officials have taken an aggressive stand against the union, mobilizing hundreds of cops, imposing an injunction limiting the number of ILA protesters at the docks, and now coming down with new indictments. They justify this antunion campaign by saying they are simply enforcing South Carolina's antilabor "right-to-work" laws.

The local daily *Charleston Post and Courier* has joined the chorus. The February 9 issue, for instance, states that Jefferson "admitt[ed] to police that his picture appeared in The Post and Courier swinging a pipe at a police officer the night of the riot." In fact, Riley said, Jefferson was attempting to defuse the situation.

The cops "provoked what happened" in the wee hours of January 20, said one dockworker who asked that his name not be used. "They had more than 600 officers. They jabbed us with nightsticks. Some of our guys almost got run over. Some got hit in the back." He reported that the police used tear gas.

Pointing at several buildings surrounding the site of the cop riot, the longshoreman said, "They had marksmen up on the roofs. They had SWAT teams all around here. They were just waiting for something to happen. If we had done anything we would have been burying some brothers now."

This worker saw a connection between the fight for union rights and the demand to bring down the Confederate battle flag that flies above the South Carolina state capitol in Columbia. He was one of dozens of ILA members from here who marched in Columbia January 17 in a massive demonstration demanding the symbol of racism come

down. The overwhelming majority of the longshoremen are Black.

As the *Militant* went to press, ILA officials were negotiating with Nordana Lines to reach an agreement to use union labor to load the company's ships.

In response to the government frame-up,

the union has established a Dockworkers' Defense Fund and is preparing a mailing to other unions around the country to appeal for support, local president Riley reported. Contributions to the Dockworkers' Defense Fund can be sent to 910 Morrison Drive, Charleston, SC 29403, Attn: Robert Ford.

International book fair kicks off in Havana

BY SAMANTHA KERN AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA, Cuba—The Ninth International Havana Book Fair opened in this city February 9. Tens of thousands of people are expected to attend this major cultural and political event, which concludes February 15. It has received extensive publicity in the media, and many in Havana as well as other cities have been making plans to attend.

Publishers located in 31 countries are participating in this event. The majority are from Latin American countries, including Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Chile, and Guatemala. There are sizable exhibits from Spain, Italy, and Germany. This year the book fair is dedicated to Italy, which has a large display of books from 80 publishing houses. Also represented are publishers located in 11 African countries, from South Africa to Senegal, and a few from Asian nations.

A noticeable aspect of the book fair is the expansion of books published in Cuba over the past several years, part of the overall economic recovery. In a television interview several days before the book fair opened, Carlos Mas Zabala, vice-president of the Cuban Book Institute, explained that last year the number of books published was three times the number printed in 1993, during the worst of the economic crisis precipitated by the collapse of favorable trade relations and aid from the former Soviet Union. More than 300 new Cuban titles are being exhibited at the fair this year.

One of the booths drawing a lot of interest is that of Pathfinder Press, which has participated in every Havana Book Fair since 1986. An international team of volunteers from the United Kingdom, Canada, Iceland, Sweden, Australia, and France is staffing the exhibit throughout the week-long fair.

As the Pathfinder volunteers began setting up the day before the inauguration, several Cuban workers who were constructing the fair's booths and involved in security tasks stopped by to check out the books, exchange views on politics, and help get the booth ready. Two titles that most caught their

attention were *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks) and "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," the lead article of the newest issue of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*.

Pathfinder is launching three new titles at the book fair. One is the just-released Spanish translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes, a book that presents the political views of the U.S.-based Socialist Workers Party on the sweeping changes in the world class struggle from the beginning of the 1990s to the present.

Two events at the book fair will launch the other new Pathfinder titles. One will feature the English and Spanish editions of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, a collection of speeches by the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary leader compiled with the cooperation of Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of Cuba's Union of Young Communists (UJC). Another event will present Pathfinder's *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* along with the Spanish-language edition produced by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Communist Party of Cuba.

These events are among the many book launches, panel discussions, and talks sched-

uled during the book fair. The inauguration of the fair featured Cintio Vitier, one of Cuba's most prominent writers and guest of honor at the book fair this year.

On the first day, the organizers also opened a special pavilion devoted to children's literature, which is in high demand in this country. The event featured cultural presentations by schoolchildren focused on the demand in Cuba—which is widely and deeply expressed here—that the U.S. government return Elián González to his country and immediate family. This was one of the daily actions that have been organized throughout the island over the past weeks as part of the campaign for the boy's return.

This year the book fair is being held at the historic La Cabaña fortress. The well-preserved 18th century Spanish fort, which overlooks Havana Bay, has particular revolutionary significance. It served as Che Guevara's Rebel Army command post after the victory of the Cuban revolution in January 1959. It also became known as a place where the communist leader promoted cultural events among the soldiers stationed there, such as ballet performances, concerts, plays, and poetry readings, as part of pointing the road forward for working people to broaden their culture as they strive to build a new society.

BOOKS FOR CUBA FUND

Send in your contribution today!

The great bulk of the Pathfinder titles taken to the Havana Book Fair will, at the end of the fair, be donated to a variety of Cuban cultural institutions. These range from neighborhood and factory libraries to university collections, where the books will remain permanently available.

This involves a substantial expense—more than \$6,000 including shipping—made possible by supporters of Pathfinder around the world. Your generous contribution is needed now.

Please send your check or money order to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, payable to the *Militant* and earmarked 'Books for Cuba' fund.

UMWA miners join fight to save hospital

BY DANNY WILSON
AND JAMES VINCENT

MAN, West Virginia—In this small rural valley community surrounded by mountains and coal mines, a struggle has broken out to save Man Appalachian Regional Hospital. The 74-bed acute care unit serves around 20,000 residents in Logan, Mingo, and Wyoming counties. The closing of Man Hospital would be a huge blow to this Appalachian coal mining region.

A hospital or clinic near where miners work is a life-and-death question for coal miners, who face health and safety perils daily.

All three counties are major coal producers with some of the largest strip and underground mines in the state. There are some 140 mines in these three counties alone. In the past decade, Logan County, where Man is located, has become the largest surface mining county in the state, producing more than 14 million tons of coal in 1997. Three of the largest "mountain top removal" sites are centered in Logan.

Man Regional, owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare, Inc., (ARH) is one of the largest employers in the region with some 200 hospital workers, most of whom are represented by the United Steelworkers of America and the Nurses Association.

The hospital was originally established in 1956 by the United Mine Workers union and the UMWA Welfare and Retirement Fund to provide low-cost health care for miners and their families. The Man hospital, one of ten "Miners Memorial" hospi-

tals established in the 1950s in Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia, was the product of big battles by the union in the 1940s to redress the abysmal conditions miners faced on the job and in their communities.

According to the *United Mine Workers Journal*, miners' life expectancy increased from 56.2 years to 62.5 years in the first five years of the Fund. When the first miners' hospital was dedicated in Beckley, West Virginia, in 1956, some 5,000 UMWA members attended the ceremony.

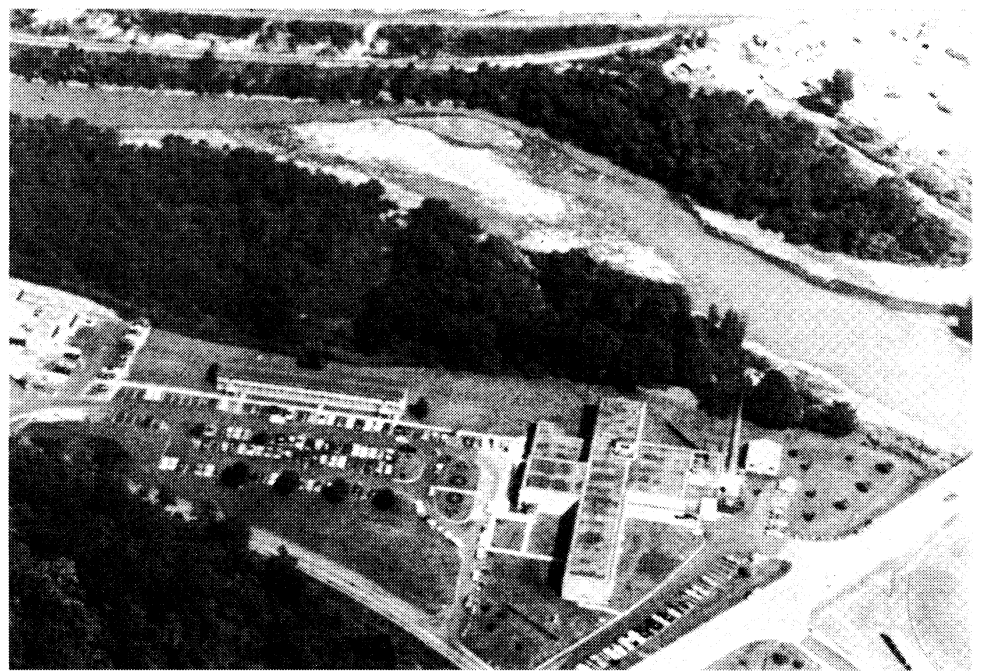
The hospital provides services for patients with minor and severe health care needs, from prenatal care and kidney dialysis to treating miners who have black lung. The hospital also provides home care for patients too sick to get to the hospital on their own. This fact is important because many workers are too poor to afford a car. In most rural areas there is no public transportation and walking is more and more the main form of transportation for West Virginia's rural poor.

Last November officials from Man Hospital announced that the hospital would shut its doors on December 31 due to financial losses of \$8 million over the past few years. Hospital administrators blame the planned closing on cuts in the federal Medicare program from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which will cut government disbursements to West Virginia hospitals by \$548 million over five years.

According to the *Charleston Daily Mail*, an estimated "4,789 fewer Medicare patients" will be "admitted to home health services" as a result of the budget act. In the region, ARH also plans to close the Accoville Clinic, Gilbert Clinic, Pineville Physical Therapy Clinic, and the Man ARH Home Health Agency. Eleven home health agencies have closed in the state.

The cuts have come down the hardest on retired coal miners and the elderly in a state that has the oldest population in the country. West Virginia is also last in the nation in household income and many rural counties have unemployment figures that remain in double digits. "Most of my friends that I grew up with have moved out of West Virginia because they couldn't find jobs," said a 25-year-old hospital worker. "Most of them got jobs in factories in Roanoke, Virginia, and North Carolina."

Unemployment rates stand at 10.9 percent in Logan County, 12 percent in Mingo, 8.5 percent in Wyoming, 18.3 percent in Calhoun, and 12.9 percent in McDowell. While the unemployment rate for the country is 4.2 percent, statewide the official rate is 6.4 percent. The child poverty rate of 30 percent has increased by nearly two-thirds since 1980 and some 18,000 workers were forced off welfare in 1998.



Aerial view of Man Appalachian Regional Hospital. In 1940s miners fought to establish such facilities, and access to them is often a life-and-death matter.

This comes in the face of Clinton's much heralded "new markets" proposal—meant to lure capitalist development in poor rural areas—featured in his January 28 "state of the union" address.

If Man Regional Hospital closed, Logan General Hospital, which filed for bankruptcy in 1998, would be the only hospital left in the county. Logan General is 13 miles away. To get there from Man you have to drive on Route 10, a highway that people here call the "most dangerous" in the state. Many cars in the town have stickers on their fenders that say, "Pray for me, I drive on rte 10."

After the announcement, no new patients were accepted in the hospital and some who needed emergency care were turned away.

For the past few months residents in this coal community have fought to keep the hospital open. Shortly after the announcement of the hospital closing community residents formed Man Community Hospital Inc., and are currently negotiating with ARH to take over the hospital. The group had paid \$1 million for equipment and hospital supplies, and agreed to take on \$2.5 million in liabilities. However, ARH rejected this proposal, saying it wanted "a \$3.5 million irrevocable letter of credit" to cover debt and future liabilities.

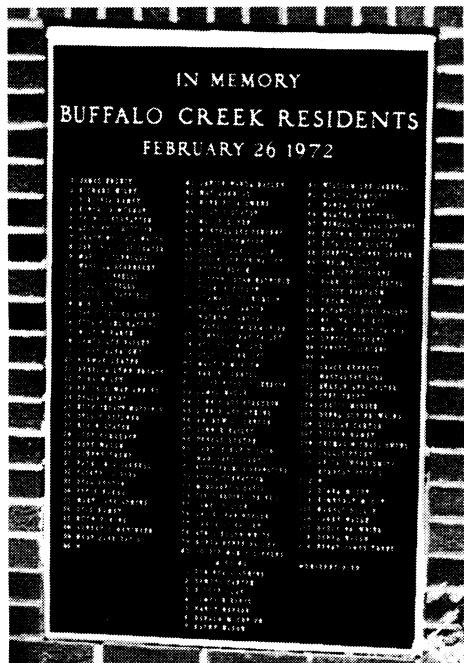
Two hundred area residents rallied at Man Junior High School December 27 to protest the announced closing of the hospital. Local politicians, union and community representatives spoke at the rally. According to the *Logan Banner*, Roger Horton from the United Mine Workers said, "We are here to

support and help keep the hospital open. We will be there tomorrow to back the community in its effort to keep the hospital open."

The next day two hundred marched through the streets of Logan to the county courthouse, where a hearing on the future of the hospital was held. After hours of testimony, Circuit Judge Eric O'Brian issued an 120-day injunction ordering the hospital to remain open until another hearing could be set.

The hospital has a broader social significance in that the surrounding coal communities were hit by the worst flood in West Virginia's history in what became known as the 1972 Buffalo Creek Disaster. The flood was caused when a Pittston Coal Company's dam burst. A wave of black water between 20 and 30 feet high, filled with thousands of tons of sludge and coal waste, poured down over 16 coal mining towns, destroying five completely. The man-made disaster killed 125 people and left 4,000 homeless. More than 1,100 people were injured or treated for illnesses.

Without Man Regional, which played a major role in treating the victims, residents estimate that scores more would have died. Although the disaster occurred 28 years ago, it left indelible scars. Just mentioning the event today brings emotions instantly to the surface.



Memorial for victims of 1972 Buffalo Creek Disaster, a flood caused by the bursting of a Pittston Coal Co. dam.

European capitalists try to defend euro

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The euro rebounded somewhat in value against the U.S. dollar in early February after the European Central Bank moved to raise interest rates. By late in the day on February 3 the currency had climbed to 98.95 cents, over two cents more than the record low reached two days earlier.

Even at the higher level the euro has lost 16 percent of its value since its debut 13 months ago. Eleven European governments

began using the euro on January 1, 1999, in the hope it would provide a stronger alternative to their national currencies, which included the German mark and the French franc.

The relative weakness of the European capitalists against their rivals in the United States lies behind the euro's decline. Many European capitalists prefer to invest in the United States rather than Europe. Through the 1980s and 1990s the U.S. rulers set up a

long-running economic boom by attacking social welfare and other elements of the social wage, and by forcing workers and small farmers to labor longer and faster. Their European rivals are further behind in this kind of "structural reform" according to Wim Duisenberg, president of the European Central Bank.

Duisenberg and his colleagues stood aside for months as the euro declined in value. The currency's depreciation lowered the dollar prices of exports from Europe, helping to spark an export-led spurt in growth. Despite this recovery, unemployment in Germany rose to 11 percent in January. In the eastern part of the country the rate stands at 19.1 percent.

Duisenberg cited fear of inflation as the reason for the European Central Bank's action. "With oil at \$30 a barrel, and the German engineering union IG Metall demanding a 5.5 percent pay rise, the fall of the euro is creating an inflationary threat which can no longer be ignored in Germany," reported the *Financial Times* on January 31.

The European bankers hope that raising interest rates will dampen the demand for money by making loans more expensive, thereby acting against any inflationary pressures building up. They also want to shore up the euro and attract investors by increasing the returns on bonds denominated in the currency.

Wall St. questions basis of growth

BY GREG MCCARTAN

A feature article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Greg Ip highlights worries of a section of the ruling class about the real health of the economic expansion. Rather than thanking the "remarkable economic boom," soaring stock prices "appear to be driving many of the positive economic forces at work," the paper says. "They have stoked consumer spending, padded corporate profits, kept a lid on inflation, and chipped away at the budget deficit."

Quoting a high officer of the Pacific Investment Management Co., the paper says, "We have a bit of a Ponzi scheme going on here. At least some of our prosperity is based upon prosperity itself."

Ip points out that many companies "have

booked hundreds of millions of dollars in profits by selling stakes in Internet related start-ups." The *Journal* worries that even "big, mature companies" like Lucent Technologies have enjoyed "windfall stock gains in their employee pension plans, enabling them to book pension income instead of expense."

Posing the question, "What happens if this wealth effect goes into reverse?" Ip says housing and other sectors of the economy will take a hit. He quotes an editor of a bourgeois economic group: "Once people realize they can't get 20 percent on stocks year after year, they'll finally realize, 'Hey, I have to save a little bit to reach my retirement goals.'" From the article it was clear what class the people he referred to are from.

for further reading...

FROM PATHFINDER

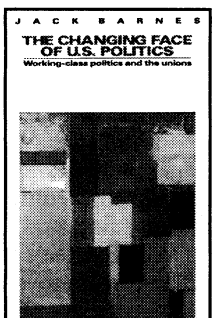
The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

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The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon defends the political and organization principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of WW II.

\$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8

Florida rallies defend affirmative action

Continued from front page

down to the hearing after work. The hearing ended at 9:00 p.m., seven hours after it began. The theater was full all day.

More than 400 people signed up to speak, but only 124 got an opportunity.

One young Black man testified, "I want to speak for my generation. The government of America doesn't give us a chance. How many Black men and women died for these rights and you want to take them away." The chair cut off the microphone but he got a standing ovation.

Protesters cheered and jumped to their feet when speakers took a stand against the One Florida Plan. While a few speakers expressed support for the governor's action, a wide range of views were expressed on how to defend affirmative action. Some said vote and send e-mail letters to the governor. Some called for a boycott of Disneyland.

Calls for street action got a tremendous response. When one speaker said, "Don't think what we say here will make a difference," a voice from the audience called out, "We'll march on Tallahassee. We'll hold the largest protest the state has ever seen." Throughout the hearing calls to march on Tallahassee rang out.

When Gov. Bush walked into the theater he was met by a chorus of boos. Bush claims his personal commitment is to maintain "diversity" in hiring and in education. He has proposed changing state university entrance requirements to guarantee admission to the top 20 percent of every graduating class in every public high school across the state. Implementation of this plan would require legislative funding.

Many of the people who testified prefaced their remarks by saying that they were products of affirmative action. When one speaker asked those who did not graduate

in the top 20 percent of their high school class to stand, the majority of the audience stood up and cheered.

Some women's organizations participated, notably professional organizations. The Miami hearing was one of three legislative hearings conceded by the governor after protests spotlighted the unilateral character of the November 9 edicts Bush calls his "One Florida Initiative." Two state senators who are Black staged a sit-in outside the governor's office in mid-January demanding more public input, an action which got support, especially from students at Florida A&M. How much opposition the governor faces, and from whom, is beginning to become more obvious.

Ward Connerly, a businessman who is leading a national campaign against affirmative action, has collected enough signatures to put a referendum on the November ballot which would amend the Florida constitution along the lines of the successful anti-affirmative action votes in California and Washington State.

Bush claims his executive orders are an attempt to save "diversity" in the face of the referendum's supposedly certain victory. At the same time as his orders ban quo-

tas, preferences, and set-asides, they include language committing the governor to "diversity." Connerly ran up against student protests when he spoke at a local campus the night before the Miami hearing.

The Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami-Dade county, Rolande Girard, attended the hearing. "This protest tonight confirms that the willingness to fight evidenced by the King Day marchers in Colombia South Carolina against the racist Confederate flag and the struggle of dockworkers in Charleston can also be found in South Florida.

"Let's make the March 7 rally in Tallahassee a massive showing of working-class solidarity," she said. "Quotas in hiring and in school admissions are necessary to eliminate the racist discrimination that permeates all aspects of U.S. society today. Affirmative action helps unify the working class in the face of attacks from the bosses and their government."

A meeting at the UNITE headquarters was organized by the NAACP to plan local participation in the March 7 protest, which drew representation from many unions. Already, 10 buses have been filled and 20 more are reserved. A statewide hot line has been set



Participants in Miami February 3 protest

up in Tallahassee to get out information. For more information call (850) 877-0307, or view the web site at www.marchon-tallahassee.com.

Eric Simpson is a member of UNITE Local 415.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

FLORIDA

Miami

Malcolm X and Revolution. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. To be held at 4582 NE 2nd Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 573-3355.

IOWA

Des Moines

Battle Against Racism Today: The Example of the Cuban Revolution. Fri., Feb. 18.

Malcolm X, An American Revolutionary in the Worldwide Fight Against Racism. Fri., Feb. 25.

The Radical Reconstruction Period and Farmers' Fight for Land and Justice Today. Fri., March 3.

All events to be held at 4582 NE 2nd Ave. Program: 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 573-3355.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Malcolm X and the Struggle for Black Liberation Today. Speaker: Brock Satter, textile

worker and Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. *Codman Square, 683 Washington St., Dorchester.* Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Farmers Fight for Justice and Land. Panel of speakers. Sun., Feb. 20, 2 p.m. *Salad Bowl Restaurant, 3949 Lindell Blvd.* Donation: \$5. Tel: (314) 924-2500.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Malcolm X: Political Legacy of an International Revolutionary. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. 2533 16th Ave. So. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

TEXAS

Houston

Malcolm X's Revolutionary Legacy. Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m.

The Continuing Struggle for Hispanic Rights: Lessons from the La Raza Unida Party and Today's Struggles. Speaker: Tom Leonard. Also

video show of excerpts from PBS "Chicano" series. Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. Both events to be held at 6969 Gulf Freeway no. 380. Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 847-0704

BRITAIN

London

Only Workers Resistance Can Defeat the Rightist Politics of Jörgen Haider. Speaker: Alan Harris, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 11, 7 p.m. 47, The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Waitangi Day and the Struggle for Maori Rights. Sat., Feb. 19, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

The War in Chechnya: The Stakes Rise for Moscow and Washington. Fri., Feb. 18, 7 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: 365 6055.

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—CALENDAR—

CONNECTICUT

New Britain

Fund Raiser for Todo Connecticut con Vieques. In support of Vieques Rescue & Development. Music and poetry. Sat., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. *Criollismo Restaurant, 340 Arch St., New Britain.*

FLORIDA

Tallahassee

Mass Demonstration in Support of Affirmative Action. Tue., March 7, 11 a.m. Assemble at the Capitol. Bus transportation available through Elite Bus Tours. Call (305) 757-9700 for reservations. \$30 per person. Airline transportation, group rates available through Great Adventure Travel (305) 858-4347.

OHIO

Mansfield

Join Locked-out USWA Local 169 Members at a Noon Rally. Sat., March 25. Town Square. For more information, call Local 169, (419) 522-9375.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Join Actions to Demand U.S. Navy Out of Vieques. Wed., Feb. 16. 10 a.m. Press Conference, at United Methodist Building, 100 Maryland Ave., N.E., across from U.S. Supreme Court. 2 to 3 p.m. Congressional briefing on Vieques, Capitol Hill (Room 2220 Rayborn House Office Building).

4 p.m. Demonstration in front of the White House, on Lafayette Park and the White House sidewalk. For more information, access <http://www.viequeslibre.org/> or contact the Rev. Eliezer Valentin at (202) 488-565, or Flavio Cumpiano at (202) 721-4688.

Rally for Rural America. Tue., March 21. Sponsored by the National Farmers Union (NFU).

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Music to their ears—"Time Warner, EMI deal may lead to layoffs—The companies expect to cut about 3,000 jobs in the next three years as a result of the pro-



Harry
Ring

posed \$20 billion merger."—News headline.

Cool society—"American college freshmen are more stressed

out than ever before, worrying about making ends meet and completing all of the tasks confronting them, a nationwide survey shows. Young women were twice as likely as young men to report they felt stressed..." News item.

Like for instance, gays and gay bashers?—The Orange, California, high school principal who denied campus recognition to the Gay-Straight Alliance testified in the club's court suit that she had tried to achieve a compromise suitable to all concerned—change the name to Tolerance for All. The club members rejected the deal.

...to continue—Pooch getting pudgy? Check out some of the day-care centers—with fitness programs included—sprouting in numerous cities. Like one in L.A. where the program includes hiking expeditions. \$40 a day.

Capitalism the petty larceny system—A "loophole" in federal regulations permits makers of cheepo boxed wines to dilute their product with water and label them with classy names like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot

Whose boom?—Back in World War II days, San Diego was

a dingy Navy town. Today it's bustling with new enterprises, new construction, etc. But in the midst of this glitter, reports the *Los Angeles Times*, there are growing numbers of homeless families desperately seeking shelter each night. It adds that this is part of the nationwide trend.

"The fastest growing portion of the homeless population are single parents with their young children..."

Cat nap—Declaring it would make state employees more productive, a Hawaii legislator introduced a bill that would entitle these

workers to devote one of their two daily 10-minute breaks to slumber.

Good as opium—The Colorado legislature is weighing a bill to allow posting the Ten Commandments in classrooms. The sponsor assures it would only help the pupils understand "the beliefs of their society" without influencing their leanings.

Like the biblical 7 days?—The Arizona legislature is considering a bill that would require teachers teaching the theory of evolution to include evidence refuting the theory.

Currency crises and fetishes now mark capitalism

The excerpt below is taken from "The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War,'" a talk given at a New York City Militant Labor Forum on Nov. 7, 1992, four days after the U.S. presidential elections. The entire talk appears in the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

International capitalism's stock, bond, and currency markets today are indeed, as widely proclaimed, becoming more and more interconnected and, partly as a result, they are also becoming more unstable. Just a little over five years ago, the world's stock markets crashed. In just one day in October 1987, the stock market in the United States

from the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder*

plunged nearly 25 percent. The crash sent shock waves through the international bourgeoisie, and working people sensed it was the harbinger of a deepening social crisis worldwide. It was the first sharp public signal of an accelerated decline in the post-World War II curve of capitalist development—the first signal that a worldwide depression had become inevitable.

Now we have seen the Japanese stock market decline by more than half since the beginning of 1990. There is a chronic credit and banking crisis facing finance capital in Japan—a deep deflationary crisis. You may have read in the late 1980s that the value in dollar terms of a relatively small portion of real estate in Tokyo had shot up to more than that of all the real estate in the state of California. What did you think when you read that? Even a person who is the most bedazzled by the fetishism of capitalism, even the most zealous worshipper at the altar of the commodity, knew that was a little much; it boded trouble.

It is important to remember that private banks, not the government, create almost all the money that circulates. They do it by granting loans. And in case problems develop, banks are supposed to have assets with real value to stand behind all those checking balances they crank out. In Japan, the estimated market value of real estate makes up a big portion of those bank reserves, and the shifting ticker prices of stocks—yes, common stocks!—make up another big hunk. Land and stock prices puffed up like a giant balloon throughout the 1980s in Japan and have been plummeting just as sharply ever since, creating big problems for Japanese banks.¹

The post-World War II capitalist land reform in Japan—imposed by U.S. occupation authorities under Gen. Douglas MacArthur—was designed from the outset to serve the interests not of working farmers, but the restoration of a stable bourgeois state. It was nothing like the Homestead Acts enacted during and after the Civil War in the United States, or the land reforms in much of Europe following the French Revolution and revolutions of 1848—even with all their bourgeois limitations. Japan also

never went through a bourgeois banking reform like that carried out in the United States in the wake of bank failures at the opening of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Today U.S. capitalism accounts for a little over a quarter of manufactured goods worldwide, and more than 15 percent of world exports. This represents a relative decline from what Wall Street and Washington had established in the decade or so after the close of World War II. The enormous absolute size of U.S. imperialism's wealth and productive capacity, however, has meant that the effects of the deepening world capitalist crisis are hitting its German and Japanese rivals substantially harder. For some time now, the relative position of German and Japanese capital has been slipping in the world imperialist system.

Since the mid-1980s, U.S. capital's share of the world export market has been rising a bit once again, while Tokyo's and especially Bonn's shares have been falling. U.S. businesses have taken back markets in computer chips and hardware, machine tools, automobiles, and other industrial goods. And this trend will likely continue until the world bourgeoisie faces some cataclysmic crisis.

The U.S. rulers continue to suck in capital from all over the world, even though German long-term interest rates are several points higher than comparable U.S. rates. We should ask ourselves: Why do the biggest banks in Japan, Germany, and elsewhere transfer capital to North America to buy up pieces of paper—Treasury bonds—from the U.S. government? Why do they buy up these pieces of paper that promise to give you dollars thirty years from now, no matter what they are worth by then? It is certainly not that the U.S. capitalist economy is so rosy.

Bankers around the world know what happened on Wall Street in October 1987, and they know the shape of the U.S. banking system. But they also know the much shakier condition of the banks in Japan, and what has been happening in Germany since "reunification." Bankers put their money where they anticipate it will be safer. But these enormous currency transfers increasingly turn the day-to-day business of banking into speculation, further destabilizing the world capitalist system.

Unimaginable sums of money are traded back and forth every day. With the development of computers and telecommunications, the speed and quantity of international transactions in a single twenty-four hours is mind-boggling.

In fact, the total dollar value of all the transactions on all the foreign currency markets for just seven business days equals the dollar value of world capitalist trade for a full year. The main function of world currency trading throughout most of the history of capitalism has been to balance out import and export deficits and surpluses

1. In January 1999, commercial land prices in Japan were more than 75 percent below their level at the opening of the decade. By the opening of 1999, Japanese banks held some \$1 trillion in bad loans. And the Tokyo stock market in early 1999 was almost two-thirds off its 1989 peak. Gripped by its worst recession in half a century in 1998-99, Japan's official jobless level reached above 4 percent for the first time in decades. Hidden unemployment reached double digits, as the grinding economic crisis hit the Japanese toilers harder than at any time since the post-World War II "takeoff."

between countries and repatriate the profits of superexploitation. As recently as the early 1970s, annual currency trading across borders was still only a fraction of world trade. Today, however, no government or big-business statistical agency really knows the exact scope and size of this currency trading, although most public estimates put it at more than \$1 trillion each day.

As profit rates decline, capitalists look for more and more ways of using money to make money. Investing in plants and equipment does not bring them sufficiently competitive returns, so they keep inventing new kinds of paper instruments to trade and speculate with, including accelerated currency speculation.

Capitalists have faced a long-run decline in profit rates at least three times before in the history of world capitalism, and each time it has led to a deep crisis before it could be turned around. But the speed of international communication today, the enormity of the monetary amounts involved, and the percentage of the world's working people brought under capitalist exploitation since the post-World War II decolonization make the potential scope and explosiveness of the coming crisis truly staggering.



Unionists marching in Tokyo on January 25 to oppose job cuts planned by Nissan Motor Co. Credit and banking crisis in Japan forces the capitalists to confront labor.

Instability and sharpening conflicts will continue to mark the imperialist world. There will be more banking and credit crises in the years ahead, and along with them, confidence in the bourgeois leaderships of the imperialist countries will continue declining, too.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



February 21, 1975

The United Auto Workers' national rally for jobs on Feb. 5 was more a preliminary signal of the pressures building up within the union movement than a model of what independent labor action can do.

The turnout of nearly 10,000 in Washington, D.C.—volunteers who had signed up for the long bus trip—was more than UAW officials had predicted, perhaps more than they wanted.

It was a militant, shouting, placard-waving, foot-stamping crowd that often broke into chants of "We want jobs!"

Speakers were caught up in the mood of the angry young workers, or at least wished to appear so. There were cheers for those who attacked military spending and tax breaks for the wealthy.

Desperation, anger, growing desire for action—it was a sign of the mood in the vast army of the unemployed. Just two days after the demonstration, the Labor Department announced that by its tally unemployment had surged to 7.5 million in January—8.2 percent of the total work force and 13.4 percent of Black workers.

When the "discouraged" workers and those forced to accept only part-time work are added in, the total of unemployed and underemployed surpasses 10 million. Some

1.8 million jobs have been wiped out just since September.



February 20, 1950

AKRON, Feb. 12—Murder of an unarmed Negro veteran by a city policeman last Thursday night has produced a wave of revulsion against police violence in Akron and a demand that Policeman Robert Wilcox, admitted slayer of Ernest Fenner, be prosecuted on a charge of murder.

Ernest Fenner, 26, was discharged from the Army in 1944 suffering from nervous disorders. In the intervening years he had Veterans Administration medical care for his condition. Thursday night Fenner went berserk and began beating his wife. Neighbors called an ambulance and the police.

Before the arrival of the police a 17-year-old neighbor had succeeded in pulling Fenner away. When police arrived, Fenner was outside his house. They immediately opened fire, killing him with two bullets.

The police claim that Fenner attacked their cruiser with an ax or a club. The self-defense argument of the police was finally exploded today when the Coroner's autopsy report on Fenner's body was made public. The report revealed that the fatal bullet entered Fenner's body from the back.

UK troops: leave Ireland!

Britain should get its troops, cops, and secret police out of Ireland now. That should be the demand of every working person, union member, and farmer, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Leave Ireland. Respect its independence and sovereignty. Tell the truth about the decades-long war to suppress the freedom struggle. Anything short of that will continually result in political and social crises and make talk of “peace” nothing more than ashes in the mouth.

London’s moves to throw out the Good Friday agreement establishing the Northern Ireland assembly and a range of other governmental structures there and its arrogant demands that the Irish Republican Army begin handing over weapons show that the British imperialists consider Northern Ireland their own, no matter what their representatives sign their name to.

London can’t get around two interrelated facts: the struggles of the Irish people are taking steps forward and, as they proceed, the ability of the oppressors to, as Gerry Adams said, “demonize” the Catholic population is undercut.

The mobilizations over the past two weeks, as well as the actions by working farmers across the entire country, are an indication of the ways working people and those standing up for a united Ireland are finding to press forward the struggle. The growing confidence of tens of thousands is evident in these actions, a bad sign for London and the unionist parties in the north.

Their actions, and refusal to accept the high dictates of imperial London, strengthen the hand of working people throughout the (not so) United Kingdom. Organizing in the coming weeks to show solidarity with the fight for a united, democratic Ireland is crucial as the British rulers ratchet up the pressure on the struggle.

Only road to fight fascism

The events in Austria this past week are an example of what “democratic” imperialism is producing, and the direction their system of exploitation and oppression is heading. It helps show the kind of political, proletarian internationalist, and fighting revolutionary parties working people must build around the world as the only hope for humanity.

“Where did this come from?” politicians of the capitalist parties across Europe ask of the coalition government in Austria that includes the Freedom Party. The party is a fascist group that thrives on demagogic attacks on government corruption and incompetence, as well as immigrant bashing and other Austrian nationalist themes.

For some time fascist currents have been developing in bourgeois politics. It is the crisis of capitalism itself and the course of the ruling parties set up in most countries coming out of World War II that is the seedbed of fascism.

The attacks on the coalition government by the conservative and social democratic parties in Europe and the United States are ineffective. Jörg Haider, the central figure in the Freedom Party, simply takes the attack and turns it with his usual demagoguery to expose the bankruptcy of these parties.

Workers and farmers have to deal with parallel figures and parties in every imperialist country—whether it be Pauline Hanson in Australia, Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, or Patrick Buchanan in the United States. Their appearance, and the hearing they gain, indicate the relative weakening of the capitalist system. In this period, their electoral successes and other gains are often temporary, and the governments they help form are weak. But the traditional ruling parties of the capitalists are losing authority.

These rightists are deadly enemies of the interests of working people. The capitalists will turn to them to save their system with bloodshed and hysteria when the crisis of their system—and the threat posed to their rule by the struggles of working people—become far enough advanced.

Only the working class and its allies among farmers and the oppressed can deal a permanent knockout blow to such virulent formations by organizing to seize power from the capitalists and leading all working people and the oppressed to overturn capitalist property relations.

This line of march—the course of the Cuban, Russian, and other socialist revolutions—is counterposed to placing any confidence in imperialist “democracy,” including calling on imperialist governments to take diplomatic action against Austria.

Working people and young fighters can read and discuss the books of the international working-class movement at the same time as they join anticapitalist struggles that break out. In particular, the Pathfinder titles *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and *Capitalism’s World Disorder* provide invaluable material for those who want to build the working-class vanguard today, in preparation for the battles to come.

Austria: fascists in coalition gov’t

Continued from front page

ultrarightist and fascist forces are a permanent feature of bourgeois politics that working people confront in every imperialist country today. This is not the first time in recent history that fascist forces have been in a government coalition in Europe. In 1994 in Italy, a government headed by Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia governed in alliance with the fascist National Alliance and rightist Northern League.

The People’s Party turned to Haider after failing to form a government with the Social Democratic party. Three months of talks between the two parties, which have ruled Austria for 55 years—often in coalition—collapsed after “the Social Democrats’ union members refused to back the measures to resolve Austria’s deepening budget crisis,” according to the *Financial Times*. The Social Democrats came in first in last October’s general elections with 33.4 percent of the vote. The Freedom Party polled 27.2 percent, coming in a narrow second over the People’s Party.

The other 14 members of the European Union (EU) immediately imposed a ban on bilateral meetings with Austrian ministers. Israel recalled its ambassador to Vienna before the coalition was sworn in. Washington announced it would limit its contacts with the new government and recalled its envoy from Vienna for temporary consultations. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright criticized a “party that does not clearly distance itself from the atrocities of the Nazi era and the politics of hate.” She said the ambassador would return the following weekend.

The new chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel of the People’s Party stated, as reported in the February 10 *New York Times*, that Austria is a “stable democracy [with] very few anti-foreigner incidents, labor strikes or violent demonstrations.”

Collective guilt

Attacks on the Austrian government ranged from a statement by the Belgian foreign minister that Europe could do without Austria, to papers such as the *New York Times* casting collective guilt on the people of the country. After reminding readers that Adolph Hitler was an Austrian, the *Times* quoted a Frenchwoman. “‘Austria is le ventre de la bête,’ literally, the womb of the beast,” the paper reported.

The Freedom Party’s predecessor was founded by supporters of the Nazi regime of the German National Socialist Party—the Nazi Party—that governed Austria in WWII. Haider’s parents were Nazi party members, and his rise to leadership of the party is peppered with statements that prettify the national socialist regime. In 1991 Haider stated, “In the Third Reich they had an ‘orderly’ employment policy.” During a 1995 parliamentary debate Haider dubbed the Nazi concentration camps the “punishment camps of National Socialism.”

After last year’s general election, Haider apologized for these and similar remarks. On the insistence of Austrian president Thomas Klestil, Schüssel and Haider signed a lengthy declaration which pledged their allegiance to “the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of the peoples of Europe,” and stated that the government would work “for an Austria in which xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and racism have no place.”

Haider said shortly afterwards that the document was “an affront to the Austrian people” and that he would not travel around the world apologizing for the Holocaust. Haider himself will not participate in the new coalition, but will continue his term as the head of government in the state of Carinthia, a post he won in March 1999 with 42 percent of the vote.

Scapegoating immigrants

The Freedom Party’s rightist politics are not confined to historical questions. Haider has built his reputation by attacking the established political parties and scapegoating immigrants. “We don’t need any immigration—we instead have to concentrate on integrating the foreigners who already are in Austria,” he declared after the formation of the new government.

Neither immigration nor unemployment in Austria are especially high by European standards. The current unemployment rate is 4.3 percent in an expanding economy, and the previous Social Democratic government restricted immigration to close to zero.

These political themes and rightist formations that voice them can be seen in many European countries today. This explains the reaction against the new government in Bonn, Paris, and other European capitals. Support for the punitive measures comes most strongly from the governments in France and Belgium, where similar ultrarightist political parties have gained a large following: in France, Jean Marie Le Pen’s National Front, and in Belgium Vlaams Block.

In fact in France, President Jacques Chirac had to go on an intensive campaign in 1998 in response to politicians from his party forming an electoral alliance with the National Front in five regions.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was cited in the *Washington Post* as fearing that the Austrian events would upset Germany, where the conservative Christian Democratic party is being torn apart by a financial scandal. Schroeder feared, wrote the *Post*, that “a political vacuum could develop that might encourage the appearance of a Haider-like figure in Germany who would seek to exploit resentment toward immigrants and dismay with the course of European integration.”

Among the central European countries opting to join the European Union, there was cautious and hesitant reactions to both the new government in Austria and the EU measures. Several border Austria, and some like Slovakia

are major trading partners with this imperialist power.

The traditional ruling parties of European capitalism are threatened by these newer formations, which build a following among middle class layers and some better-off workers. They seize the themes advanced by the major parties and take them to their logical conclusion. These themes include extreme nationalism, scapegoating of layers in society, and demagogic appeals to provide moral values and good government for society.

Poses as defender of democracy

In face of the attacks on the new coalition government, Haider has portrayed his Freedom Party as a defender of democracy and a responsible party. He castigated “leftists who do not accept democratic decisions” of the government for violence in the capital, and said that if other parties in the country bowed to outside pressure “then we might as well abolish democracy in this country straight away.”

Brushing aside the threat of diplomatic isolation, Haider said the European Union “will quickly get used to the fact that the Freedom Party now sits in the Cabinet, which has good programs, expertise and good manners.”

At the same time, he lashed out at the sanctions, calling French president Jacques Chirac “a megalomaniac, a hypocrite and a loser.... There is a lot of excitement in the European chicken house—even though the fox has not even got in,” he said. “Despite all attempts from the outside and despite the terror of the street,” he crowed, “we have succeeded in forming a government that is a real shift in power—it is a historic day for Austria.”

Both President Thomas Klestil and former Social Democratic chancellor Viktor Klima should be investigated by a commission for plotting with other social democrats in Europe to attack the new government, said Haider on February 6. “They have to be able to prove that they have not committed some form of political high treason against Austria and foreign leading figures should be called as witnesses,” he said.

This is the kind of demagoguery that Haider will try to use to build up his party’s following.

Carl-Erik Isacson is a member of the Metalworkers Union in Södertälje Sweden.

Boeing faces strike of 8,000

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE—Thousands of engineers and technical workers walked out of Boeing’s factories and work centers throughout the Puget Sound region February 9. More than 8,000 then converged on the Renton Memorial Stadium from Boeing’s Everett, Renton, Seattle, and Auburn facilities for a rally.

They began organized picketing immediately afterwards and plan to picket around the clock at all production facilities. As production workers, organized by the International Association of Machinists (IAM), were coming in and out on their normal shift change, many stopped to shake the hand of pickets, express their support, or join the picket line briefly. The IAM, the largest union at Boeing, reached a new contract with the aerospace company last fall that included a “no strike” clause that formally prohibits the IAM from honoring the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA) picket lines.

Wes Josaphat, an engineer in galley design, has worked for Boeing for three years, and was picketing outside the Renton plant. “I’m not surprised by all the support we’re getting,” he said. “The lack of respect they [Boeing] showed us meant we had to walk.”

Organized by SPEEA, they struck Boeing one week after rejecting the aerospace giant’s “last and final offer.” The engineers voted down the contract by 51 percent and the technicians by 61 percent. One central concern was Boeing’s refusal to offer guaranteed wage raises for all members. Last December SPEEA members overwhelmingly rejected Boeing’s first offer, which included many concessions, by a 98 percent margin. SPEEA represents some 23,000 engineers and technicians, with nearly 14,000 dues-paying members. SPEEA affiliated with the AFL-CIO last fall.

After rejecting Boeing’s last offer, a top federal mediator was dispatched from Washington, D.C., to try to work out a deal. The talks failed, foundering on Boeing’s intransigence. James Dagnon, Boeing’s vice-president of human relations, told reporters the company wasn’t prepared to put any more money into its offers to SPEEA.

Boeing then deliberately attacked SPEEA members when it took its last offer from the table, reverting to its original proposals that were soundly rejected in December. A major aspect of that contract was forcing SPEEA members to begin paying for their medical coverage.

This has made it clearer to many Machinists union members that they have a stake in supporting SPEEA’s strike. As John Heft, an assembler mechanic in Renton, said as the strikers walked out, “I hope they win. It affects us, too. If they get beaten down, it gives Boeing encouragement to go after us.”

Scott Breen is an assembler at Boeing’s Renton factory, and a member of IAM Local 751.

Skychefs strikers say 'we're not going away until we get justice'

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON— "We're not going away till we get justice," said Surinder Kaur, after she and other union members on strike against Lufthansa Skychefs rejected the company's latest "final" offer.

Kaur and 272 other members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) at the airline catering firm were locked out in November 1998. The company fired the union members after they went on a one-day strike in protest of changing work practices and pay. The strikers, predominantly from the Indian subcontinent, have sustained a determined fight, including 24-hour pickets at the plant, for 14 months.

A meeting of the strikers on January 27 heard a report from TGWU Civil Aviation leader George Ryde. He reported the union had agreed with the company December 16 to reemploy 25 workers immediately, 50 more within six months, and further jobs to follow within the subsequent year.

Since a majority of strikers now have other jobs, a compensation package of £2 million was offered, which is about £750 for each year of service. Union lawyers told the meeting that legal action scheduled to begin February 1 was unlikely to be successful for the majority of strikers and urged adoption of the "final offer." Workers discussed the proposal for more than three hours and overwhelmingly voted in favor of the course outlined by the union officials. Picket lines were kept up pending the final agreement.

Some workers pointed out that the pact signaled a retreat on the part of the bosses. The plant manager "didn't want anyone back. He thought we'd go away and we didn't. Now he'll take some back. We can't say it's perfect, but he's shamed," explained Sidhu, one of the strikers.

Another worker said he thought the whole deal was "like a gun at our heads." Many workers seeking to return to the job said it was unclear whether they would go back

with or without seniority rights. The next day the picket lines were larger than usual with many workers demanding an answer on terms for the return to work.

Strike leader Adesh Farmahan explained that since those on the picket line were the ones who had sustained the fight, the strike committee had pressed for an answer from the company. He reported the company responded by making clear that "they were not going to stick with the words of the agreement. This was not reemployment but they would be taking on those who returned as new starters."

With the mood on the picket line overwhelmingly against this, Farmahan explained the union "backed the strikers and went to court February 1," canceling the deal. On the picket line the mood for continuing the fight had stiffened.



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

Mass picket line and rally of 300 people for Skychefs strikers Feb. 1, 1999, at London Heathrow Airport. The workers rejected another "final offer" by the company.

"He's made final offers before," said Kaur. "Two days after being sacked he said he wanted to reinstate us, but without the union shop stewards. Then in September he said we could apply for jobs if we were

qualified. We'll just stay here till he learns that he can't pick and choose."

Pete Clifford is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union.

Garment worker killed in factory fire

BY PACO SÁNCHEZ

NEW YORK—A garment worker, Bienvenido Hernández, 41, died as a result of the fire that broke out the morning of January 31 in the basement of the building where he worked in the garment district in Manhattan.

Scores of other workers were trapped in the 10-story building that houses eight garment shops and other offices.

"We thought the fire was in our floor, the 10th floor. There was so much smoke we couldn't even see the tables where we work," said a co-worker of Hernández. Workers in the building tried to exit through the stairwell, which doubled as the fire escape, but found only thick black smoke.

Other workers from the lower floors jumped to the street, incurring minor injuries. One woman was in critical condition after falling inside the building.

Hernández died as he was trying to climb down four stories to the rooftop of the adja-

cent building. He and his coworkers had made a rope out of cloth for the escape. Hernández lost control and fell as he was climbing down.

This attempt was necessary because, to the surprise of the workers on the upper floors, there was not a fire escape on the outside of the building. Other workers on the eighth floor exited by going down cloth ropes of their own, although many stopped trying this after seeing the worker fall.

A ladder from a fire truck was used to rescue people trapped on the upper floors. It took more than an hour for the 150 firefighters deployed to the building to bring the smoke and flames from the basement under control.

The landlord had been granted permission by the city's Buildings Department in 1997 to use the basement for manufacturing use, which meant it was filled with rags and rubbish.

Workers in the garment district are famil-

iar with similar conditions in the hundreds of small garment shops located in midtown Manhattan.

Most stairwells are heavily used because of congestion on the elevators. Most are dangerous, narrow places with worn-out steps from frequent use. As the fire showed, the doors do not protect the stairwell from becoming a conduit for smoke and flames to reach the upper floors. The tragedy and political reverberations of the fire didn't escape City Hall, forcing Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to visit the site. It is located one block away from the large sculpture of a button and needle and a tourist information booth of the area the city calls the Fashion District.

Known as the garment district by thousands of mostly immigrant and unorganized workers, the area is in reality the center of a thriving and profitable industry where bosses and city officials know how unprepared they are for deadly accidents like this.

In March 1911 the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company cost the lives of 146 garment workers, dozens of them jumping to their death from the ninth floor of the building in which they were trapped. Tens of thousands of workers marched in a tribute to those who died behind a banner that read: "We Demand Fire Protection."

Sprinklers, fire escapes, and fire drills became demands of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union—the predecessor of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

As part of the social movement it led, tens of thousands of garment workers organized themselves into the union in the city.

Paco Sánchez is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Strikers fight for contract at 'Calgary Herald'

BY ANNETTE KOURI

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Workers at the *Calgary Herald* distribution center and news room personnel are fighting for their first contract.

Their struggle was first brought to national attention in December when 35 police cars descended on a solidarity rally of 400 union activists, sponsored by the Alberta Federation of Labour.

John Webster, president of Local 34M of the Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU), said there were also "four mounted police in full riot gear. We were not trying to stop production. It was a solidarity rally."

The strike began November 8. According to striking reporter Naomi Lakritz, the unions are demanding an agreement that includes the "most basic of contract clauses providing for seniority, job security, a wage grid, and freedom from harassment." Production workers are members of the GCIU

and journalists are members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP).

"In the last 10 weeks I've had a picket sign in my hands rather than a camera," Shanon Oatway told a meeting of the Vancouver District Labour Council last month. Oatway has been a photographer at the *Herald* for 17 years. "One thing I've discovered is that a union means solidarity. I want to thank you for the solidarity you've shown and I'm asking you to dig deeper. We need your help," she said.

Oatway's comments were part of a short tour by the strikers to Vancouver, Victoria, and Nanaimo in British Columbia. The *Herald* is the only daily in Calgary and was purchased in the last few years by newspaper magnate Conrad Black, who owns more than 600 newspapers worldwide.

In an open letter calling for support, the striking locals point out there are also labor disputes at the *Jerusalem Post*, the *Regina*

Leader-Post, *Le Soleil* in Quebec City, and the *Castlegar Sun* in the Kootenay in British Columbia.

"As collective agreements come up for renewal at his other newspapers," the letter says, "Black will try to crush them, too. The outcome of the *Calgary Herald* strike will have far-reaching implications for thousands of workers."

The two unions have launched a boycott of the *National Post*, Conrad Black's Canada-wide daily. The Canadian Labour Congress, the major trade-union federation in Canada, backs the boycott. The unions can be contacted at the CEP/GCIU Strike Fund, P.O. Box 37009, Calgary, Alberta T2E 8V1. Tel: (403)207-1554.

Annette Kouri is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of the International Association of Machinists, contributed to this article.

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LETTERS

Is Haider a fascist?

I heard that the extreme right-wing politician Jörg Haider and his party have formed a coalition government with the conservatives in Austria. So I would like for you to answer some of my questions. Do you think that Haider is a fascist like Buchanan? I wouldn't think that Haider is a fascist because he doesn't seem to break from the traditions of bourgeois politics in Austria and because he does not seem to try to build a social movement that will crush the working class in battles. If he is not a fascist, what's the difference between a fascist and him? And how can you qualify him

then?

Another question that came to me was how and why did this pattern emerge in Austrian bourgeois politics? And what does it mean for the Austrian and European working class? Why did this shift towards the right happen in 2000 rather than before? And finally, what does this mean to the dream of a unified Europe ("European Union")?

*Dimitris Fasfalas
Oshawa, Ontario*

Scabs and nonunion labor

The phrase, "600 cops deployed to escort scabs to work" is an error

(see front page caption of the February 7, 2000 *Militant*). We must remember that the Longshoremen are not on strike. As stated in the second paragraph of the article, "the action, called to protest the use of nonunion labor," is absolutely correct. We should be very careful not to confuse readers of the present facts.

*Paul Cornish
Atlanta, Georgia*

Editor's note: The term "scab" was used because a small number of workers are being escorted through police lines as part of a union-busting operation. International

Longshoremen's Association (ILA) pickets and rallies have also made it clear that the move undercuts the union. No one hired to work the Nordana line ship is confused about what is going on. Since ILA workers have unloaded these ships in the past—for more than 20 years—the nonunion longshoremen are in fact working as scabs.

Keep sending 'Militant'

Enclosed is \$15 towards the continuation of my subscription to the *Militant*. I will send you another \$15 when I get paid again, next month. Whatever you do, trust me that it's not necessary to stop send-

ing me the *Militant*. Only the *Militant* tells me what is the underlying cause of all the evil that is going on on this planet: CAPITALISM....

*A prisoner
Collegeville, Pennsylvania*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Australia: textile workers protest layoffs

BY ANNE KING
AND DOUG COOPER

RUTHERFORD, Australia—Sacked workers at National Textiles here set up a picket line at the factory gate January 25. The union members are waging a fight for \$A11 million (\$A1= US\$1.63) in entitlements owed to them after the company announced four days earlier that the business was unsustainable. The bosses shut the gates and appointed an administrator.

Workers are maintaining a round-the-clock picket line to prevent the company from removing machinery and other assets. The pickets are mainly members of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia, but also from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, and the Electrical Trades Union.

The workers are entitled to pay from unused sick days, annual holiday pay, and long service leave pay, as well as redundancy (severance) pay. Such payments for workers designated as "permanent" in each industry or workplace are the product of collective bargaining by unions won over decades. At National Textiles, one worker with 40 years' service said he estimated that he was entitled to \$A83,000 in entitlements but that the company says he will receive no more than \$A20,000.

The show of support for this fight is evident at the tents set up at the factory gates. Tables and refrigerators are full of food dropped off by individuals, groups, and small businesses in the community. Personal cash donations have been collected at the picket line from residents, taxi drivers, and other workers.

National Textiles, with more than 300 workers, is one of the major employers in a region already hard hit by closings of most of the BHP Newcastle steelworks, as well as other factories, coal mines, and government and banking services.

A busload of wharfies (dockworkers), members of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), from the nearby port of Newcastle, marched up to the gates and pledged their support January 31. Collections have been held at different MUA-organized facilities in Sydney and Newcastle. Wharfies across three shifts at Patrick stevedores' container terminal at Port Botany in Sydney collected more than \$A1,100, as did workers at the P&O-owned CTAL container terminal.

At a meeting of creditors at the Newcastle Workers' Club January 28, the workers were told that they might have to wait up to two years to receive a maximum of half the redundancy money they are owed.

The chief executive of National Textiles, Derek Hodge, told the workers that if creditors agreed, a deed of arrangement would be signed in the next few weeks, after which about \$A3 million worth of entitlements would be paid to the sacked workers. Then in the next 12 to 18 months, when the sale of equipment was finalized, redundancy payments would be paid at a maximum of 50 cents on the dollar.

Toni Oszko is a grader who worked at the plant for 16 years. She said, "They're chipping away [at our rights and conditions]. It's frightening. In another 10 years, we don't know where we'll be." Karl Oszko, a textile mechanic with 36 years' service with the company, added, "It's only a promise, but no one's going to be able to collect on it."

Graham Schuler has worked for nine years at the plant as an electrician and is an Electrical Trades Union delegate. He explained, "We reject their offer of 50 percent. We expect to get our full redundancy payments and we're willing to fight for it." Several pickets said their line would stay up until there was "good news."

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia. Ron Poulsen, also a member of the MUA, contributed to this article.

Protest says jail cops who killed Diallo

BY GLOVA SCOTT
AND MARY ANN SCHMIDT

NEW YORK—A candlelight vigil in the Bronx drew 250 people February 4 to mark the one-year anniversary of the killing of Amadou Diallo in a hail of police bullets and to press for conviction of the cops who killed him.

Diallo, a 22-year-old worker from Guinea, was returning home to his apartment when four New York City cops gunned him down. He was unarmed. His killing sparked massive street protests, including daily actions at police headquarters where some 1,200 people were arrested in acts of civil disobedience over the course of several months.

Diallo's parents, Democratic politician Al Sharpton, and others spoke at the event. "This should not happen to anyone anywhere in New York, anywhere in this country, or anywhere in the world," said Kadiatou Diallo, the victim's mother, as she thanked protesters for their support.

The four cops are now on trial upstate in Albany, after the New York Supreme Court agreed with defense attorney motions that any jury selected in the Bronx is biased against the police.

A 24-year-old electrician at the event said the state "moved that trial up there because we got two convictions around the [Abner] Louima case, and [New York Mayor] Giuliani doesn't want another." Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, was brutally sodomized by Brooklyn police officers in August of 1997. Officer Justin Volpe was given a 30-year sentence for that attack and Officer Charles Schwarz was convicted of holding down Louima during the assault.

As the vigil ended, participants placed candles and flowers outside and inside the tiny vestibule where Diallo was killed. Bullet holes are still visible along with handwritten messages in the entrance way at 1157 Wheeler Avenue where he lived.

Mamadou Diallo, Amadou's cousin, is the president of the youth group of the West Guinean Association. "This is the first time the association has been involved in a political struggle," Diallo said.

A jury of eight whites and four Blacks has been selected to hear the trial in which police officers Richard Murphy, Kenneth Boss, Edward McMellon, and Sean Carroll are charged with second degree murder. Their lawyers argue they fired in self-defense and charge Diallo with suspicious hand movements and evasive behavior that led the four cops to believe he had a gun.

Neighbor Debbie Rivera testified she heard a short burst of gunfire, a pause, then a long burst of shooting by the police. Six other witnesses testified that the street, the vestibule, and the hallway behind Diallo were well lit, disproving defense lawyers' contention that it was dark and the wallet in Diallo's hand was mistaken for a gun.

The big-business news media is trying to prepare the ground for acquittal or at least a lesser sentence, portraying the killing of Diallo as a tragedy that comes with the need for tough policing measures that bring down crime.

The four cops responsible are portrayed



Recent protest in New York demanding justice for Amadou Diallo

as good policemen who were emotionally devastated by the incident. On February 4 cops held a support rally for the four inside the Bronx 43rd Precinct station house.

Glova Scott is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Mary Ann Schmidt is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Lack of repairs probable cause of airline crash

BY BERNIE SENTER

SAN FRANCISCO—The crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 into the Pacific Ocean near Los Angeles has renewed questions about the airline's maintenance program, which has been under scrutiny by a federal grand jury since last year. The January 31 crash killed 88 passengers and crew members.

Minutes before the plane plunged into the ocean, the pilots on the flight from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to San Francisco reported to air traffic control that the horizontal stabilizer on their MD-83 aircraft had jammed. The stabilizer is a small wing on top of the tail used to keep the plane flying level. Without control of the horizontal stabilizer, the pilots have no way of keeping the plane balanced.

Pilots on Flight 261 contacted a maintenance crew in Seattle for help in their attempts to regain control of the plane.

In April 1999 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a directive instructing airlines to inspect the MD-80 series aircraft for corroded hinges that join the horizontal and vertical tail sections. While no one knows exactly why Flight 261 crashed, mechanics had not yet inspected this aircraft. Alaska Airlines scheduled the inspection for June 2000. The FAA order noted that the corrosion could jeopardize the "structural integrity" of an airplane. Still, the FAA gave airlines 18 months to repair any corroded parts.

In June 1998, nine years after the first cases of corrosion were reported, the FAA proposed that the airlines disassemble part of the tail section to perform the inspections and replace parts if needed. The procedure was projected to take 117 hours and cost \$7,020 per airplane.

The Air Line Pilots Association endorsed the procedure, but at least three airlines protested. Officials at American Airlines, which

operate 259 MD-80s, said too many planes would be put out of service if they were forced to meet the deadline. They complained that it would cost them \$2.2 million.

In response to the airlines' complaints, the FAA scaled back the rules. Instead of taking apart the tail, the airlines could just check the exterior of the parts for corrosion. This would take an estimated one hour per plane. This one-hour inspection hadn't been performed on Flight 261.

Alaska Airlines has also been the subject of a federal investigation looking into allegations that supervisors falsified logs at their Oakland International Airport maintenance facility.

Documents seized by the government in December 1998 showed one MD-80 serviced in Oakland flew after an incomplete final check. Another aircraft was cleared after a supervisor falsified papers for a check of the plane's throttle. The FAA concluded that the planes were flown 844 times in an "unworthy condition" in three months.

John Gustafson, an airline mechanic in Oakland, quit Alaska after he complained that supervisors urged him to clear an aircraft with an unsafe engine.

The Flight 261 aircraft was overhauled twice in Oakland. It had also been serviced in Seattle on January 11 and January 30, the day before the crash.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that "a source close to the federal grand jury investigation of Alaska's maintenance procedures said the aircraft was due for a tail assembly check in January 1999. 'Alaska didn't have the correct equipment (to check for corrosion) at the time,' said the source.... 'Yet I believe they certified the plane as having been ready and repaired.'"

Newspaper accounts of the crash and investigation have tried to blame the mechanics for the falsified safety records, letting

Alaska Airlines off the hook. The *Los Angeles Times* reported February 5, "FAA inspectors uncovered evidence that mechanics had falsified records and failed to complete required maintenance." A few paragraphs later the article states, "Alaska officials defended their maintenance program and denied that there had been any impropriety." But it was the mechanics themselves who blew the whistle on the company, and the company that carried out retribution against the union workers.

In like fashion, articles are now implying that the pilots of Flight 261, in the midst of the emergency, share some responsibility for the crash. Some are second guessing the pilots' decision not to attempt an earlier landing. The *Seattle Times* wrote February 4, "One of the possibilities reportedly being examined by investigators is that in following standard emergency procedures, the crew inadvertently did something that led to the final plunge."

On February 2 an American Airlines MD-80 made an emergency landing in Phoenix after the pilot reported a possible horizontal stabilizer problem. Three days later, another Alaska Airlines MD-83 returned to Reno, Nevada, shortly after takeoff when the pilot reported similar problems.

Jack Evans, a spokesman for Alaska, said the airline has no plans to ground its 35 MD-83s or make any unscheduled maintenance checks.

The *Seattle Times* noted February 7, "Alaska Airlines officials think the Reno problem occurred because pilots are being over cautious and running the stabilizer through several complete up-and-down cycles before takeoff—'overheating the motors,' Evans said."

Bernie Senter is an airline worker and a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 1781.